

A
L E T T E R

TO THE REVEREND

MR. JOHN WESLEY:

IN ANSWER TO HIS

S E R M O N,

INTITULED,

FREE - G R A C E.

By GEORGE WHITEFIELD, A. B.

LATE OF PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD.

BUT WHEN PETER WAS COME TO ANTIOCH, I WITHSTOOD HIM
TO THE FACE, BECAUSE HE WAS TO BE BLAMED.

GAL. ii. 11.

L O N D O N,

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TO THE READER.

SINCE the death of the late Mr. WESLEY, many controversies having taken place between the hearers of the late Mr. WHITEFIELD, and those of Mr. WESLEY, respecting the Sentiments of each, it has been thought adviseable to republish, literally, this Pamphlet, that all may be enabled to judge for themselves.

ADVERTISEMENT,

Prefixed by Mr. WHITEFIELD to the First Edition.

THE Reader will find the following pages a full Answer to Two little Tracts lately published, intituled, *Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints*, and *Predestination calmly considered*.

P R E F A C E.

I Am very well aware what different effects the publishing this Letter against the dear Mr. Wesley's Sermon will produce. Many of my friends, that are strenuous advocates for Universal Redemption, will immediately be offended. Many that are zealous on the other side will be much rejoiced. They that are lukewarm on both sides, and are carried away with carnal reasoning, will wish this matter had never been brought under debate. The reasons I have given at the beginning of the letter, I think sufficient to satisfy all of my conduct herein. I desire, therefore, that they who hold Election would not triumph, or make a party on one hand (for I detest any such thing;) and that they who are prejudiced against that doctrine, be not too much concerned or offended on the other. Known unto God are all his ways from the beginning of the world. The great day will discover why the Lord permits dear Mr. Wesley and me to be of a different way of thinking. At present I shall make no enquiry into that matter beyond the account which he has given of it himself in the following letter, which I lately received from his own dear hands.

" LONDON, AUGUST 9, 1740.

" MY DEAR BROTHER,

" **I** Thank you for yours, May the 24th. The case
 " is quite plain. There are bigots both for
 " Predestination and against it. God is sending a mes-
 " sage to those on either side; but neither will receive
 " it, unless from one who is of their own opinion. There-
 " fore, for a time, you are suffered to be of one opinion,
 " and I of another. But when his time is come, God
 " will do what man cannot, namely, make us both of
 " one mind. Then persecution will flame out, and it
 " will be seen whether we count our lives dear unto our-
 " selves, so that we may finish our course with joy.

" I am, my dearest Brother, ever yours,

" J. WESLEY."

Thus my honoured friend. I heartily pray God to
 hasten the time for his being clearly enlightened into all
 the Doctrines of Divine Revelation, that we may thus be
 closely united in principle and judgment, as well as heart
 and affection. And then, if the Lord should call us to
 it, I care not if I go with him to prison, or to death. For,
 like Paul and Silas, I hope we shall sing praises to God,
 and count it our highest honour to suffer for Christ's sake,
 and lay down our lives for the brethren.

A LET-

A
L E T T E R

FROM THE REVEREND

MR. GEORGE WHITEFIELD,

TO THE REVEREND

MR. JOHN WESLEY.

BETHESDA, IN GEORGIA,

DECEMBER 24, 1740.

REVEREND AND VERY DEAR BROTHER,

GOD only knows what unspeakable sorrow of heart I have felt on your account, since I left England last. Whether it be my infirmity or not, I frankly confess, that Jonah could not go with more reluctance against Nineveh, than I now take pen in hand to write against you. Was nature to speak, I had rather die than do it; and yet, if I am faithful to God, and to my own and others souls, I must not stand neuter any longer. I am very apprehensive that our common adversaries will rejoice to see us differing among ourselves. But what can I say? The children of God are in danger of falling
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ing into error.—Nay, numbers have been misled, whom God has been pleased to work upon by my ministry, and a greater number are still calling aloud upon me also to shew my opinion. I must then shew, that I know no man after the flesh; and that I have no respect to persons, any farther than is consistent with my duty to my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

This Letter, no doubt, will lose me many friends. And for this cause, perhaps, God has laid this difficult task upon me, even to see whether I am willing to forsake all for Him, or not. From such considerations as these, I think it my duty to bear an humble testimony, and earnestly plead for the truths which, I am convinced, are clearly revealed in the word of God. In the defence whereof I must use great plainness of speech, and treat my dearest friends upon earth with the greatest simplicity, faithfulness, and freedom, leaving the consequences of all to God.

For some time before, and especially since my last departure from England, both in public and private, by preaching and printing, you have been propagating the doctrine of *Universal Redemption*. And when I remember how Paul reprov'd Peter for his dissimulation, I fear I have been sinfully silent too long. Oh! then, be not angry with me, dear and honoured Sir, if now I deliver my soul, by telling you, that I think, in this, you greatly err.

'Tis not my design to enter into a long debate on
God's

GOD'S DECREES. I refer you to Dr. Edwards his *Veritas Redux*, which, I think, is unanswerable, except in a *certain point*, concerning a middle sort between elect and reprobate, which he himself in effect afterwards condemns.

I shall only make a few remarks upon your Sermon, intituled *Free Grace*. And before I enter upon the discourse itself, give me leave to take a little notice of what, in your Preface, you term *an indispensable obligation* to make it public to all the world. I must own, that I always thought you were quite mistaken upon that head. The case (you know) stands thus: when you was at Bristol, I think you received a letter from a private hand, charging you with not preaching the Gospel, because you did not preach up Election. Upon this, you drew a lot. The answer was—*Preach and print*. I have often questioned, as I do now, whether, in so doing, you did not tempt the Lord. A due exercise of religious prudence, without a lot, would have directed you in that matter. Besides, I never heard that you enquired of God, whether or not Election was a Gospel doctrine. But I fear, taking it for granted it was not, you only enquired whether you should be silent, or preach and print against it? However this be, the lot came out—*Preach and print*; accordingly, you *preached and printed* against Election. At my desire, you suppressed the publishing the Sermon whilst I was in England; but soon sent it into the world

world after my departure. Oh, that you had kept it in! However, if that Sermon was printed in answer to a lot, I am apt to think, one reason why God should so suffer you to be deceived was, that hereby a special obligation might be laid upon me faithfully to declare the Scripture Doctrine of Election, that thus the Lord might give me a fresh opportunity of seeing what was in my heart, and whether I would be true to His cause or not; as you could not but grant, He did once before, by giving you such another lot at Deal. The morning I sailed from Deal for Gibraltar, you arrived from Georgia. Instead of giving me an opportunity to converse with you, though the ship was not far off the shore, you drew a lot, and immediately set forwards to London. You left a letter behind you, in which were words to this effect—"When I saw God, by "the wind which was carrying you out, brought "me in, I asked counsel of God. His answer you "have inclosed." This was a piece of paper, in which was written these words—"Let him return "to London."

When I received this, I was somewhat surprized. Here was a good man telling me he had cast a lot, and that God would have me return to London. On the other hand, I knew my call was to Georgia, and that I had taken leave of London, and could not justly go from the soldiers who were committed to my charge. I betook myself with a friend to prayer.

That

That passage on the first book of Kings, chap. xiii. where we are told—" That the Prophet was slain by
 " a lion, that was tempted to go back contrary to
 " God's exprefs order, upon another Prophet's telling him God would have him do so :"—this passage, I say, was powerfully impressed upon my soul. I wrote you word that I could not return to London. We sailed immediately. Some months after, I received a letter from you at Georgia, wherein you wrote words to this effect—" Though God never
 " before gave me a wrong lot, yet, perhaps, he suffered me to have such a lot at that time, to try
 " what was in your heart." I should never have published this private transaction to the world, did not the glory of God call me to it.—It is plain you had a wrong lot given you here; and justly, because you tempted God in drawing one. And thus I believe it is in the present case. And, if so, let not the children of God, who are mine and your intimate friends, and advocates for *Universal Redemption*, think that doctrine true, because you preached it up in compliance with a lot given out from God.

This, I think, may serve as an answer to that part of the Preface to your printed Sermon, wherein you say—" Nothing but the strongest conviction,
 " not only that what is here advanced is the truth as
 " it is in Jesus, but also that I am *indispensibly obliged*
 " to declare this truth to all the world." That you believe what you have wrote to be truth, and that

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you

you honestly aimed at God's glory in writing, I do not in the least doubt. But then, honoured Sir, I can't but think you have been much mistaken in imagining that your tempting God, by casting a lot in the manner you did, could lay you under an *indispensible obligation* to any action, much less to publish your Sermon against the doctrine of Predestination to Life.

I must next observe, that as you have been unhappy in printing at all, upon such an *imaginary warrant*, so you have been as unhappy in the choice of your text. Honoured Sir, how could it enter into your heart to chuse a text to disprove the doctrine of Election, out of the 8th of the Romans; where this doctrine is so plainly asserted, that once talking with a Quaker upon this subject, he had no other way of evading the force of the Apostle's assertion, than by saying—"I believe Paul was in the wrong." And another friend lately, who was once highly prejudiced against Election, ingenuously confessed, that he used to think St. Paul himself was mistaken, or that he was not truly translated.

Indeed, honoured Sir, it is plain, beyond all contradiction, that St. Paul, through the whole eighth of the Romans, is speaking of the privileges of those only who are really in Christ. And let any unprejudiced person read what goes before, and what follows your text, and he must confess the word *all* only signifies those that are in Christ; and the latter part
of

of the text plainly proves what, I find, dear Mr. Wesley will by no means grant; I mean, the final perseverance of the children of God—"He that
 " spared not his own Son, but freely gave him for
 " us all, (*i. e.* all Saints;) how shall he not, with
 " him, also freely give us all things?"—*Grace*, in particular, to enable us to persevere, and every thing else necessary to carry us home to our Father's heavenly kingdom.

Had any one a mind to prove the doctrine of Election, as well as of *Final Perseverance*, he could hardly wish for a text more fit for his purpose than that which you have chosen to *disprove* it. One that does not know you, would suspect you yourself was sensible of this: for, after the first paragraph, I scarce know whether you have mentioned it so much as once through your whole Sermon.

But your discourse, in my opinion, is as little to the purpose as your text; and, instead of warping, does but more and more confirm me in the belief of the doctrine of God's Eternal Election.

I shall not mention how illogically you have proceeded. Had you wrote clearly, you should first, honoured Sir, have proved your proposition—"That God's Grace is free to all;" and then, by way of inference, exclaimed against what you call the *horrible Decree*. But you knew people (because *Arminianism*, of late, has so much abounded amongst us) were generally prejudiced against the doctrine

of Reprobation; and therefore thought, if you kept up their dislike of that, you could overthrow the doctrine of Election entirely. For, without doubt, the doctrine of Election and Reprobation must stand or fall together.

But, passing by this, as also your equivocal definition of the word *Grace*, and your false definition of the word *Free*; and that I may be as short as possible, I frankly acknowledge, I believe the doctrine of Reprobation, that God intends to give saving Grace, through Jesus Christ, only to a certain number; and that the rest of mankind, after the fall of Adam, being justly left of God to continue in sin, will at last suffer that eternal death which is it's proper wages.

This is the established doctrine of Scripture; and acknowledged as such in the 17th Article of the Church of England, as Bishop Burnet himself confesses—yet dear Mr. Wesley absolutely denies it.

But the most important objections which you have urged against this Doctrine, as reasons why you reject it, being seriously considered, and faithfully tried by the word of God, will appear to be of no force at all. Let the matter be humbly and calmly reviewed, as to the following heads.

“ *First*, You say, “ If this be so, (*i. e.* if there be
 “ an Election) then is all preaching vain: it is need-
 “ less to them that are elected; for they, whether
 “ with preaching or without, will infallibly be saved.

“ Therefore

“ Therefore the end of preaching, to save souls, is
 “ void with regard to them. As it is useless to
 “ them that are not elected, for they cannot possibly
 “ be saved; they, whether with preaching or with-
 “ out, will infallibly be damned. The end of
 “ preaching is therefore void with regard to them
 “ likewise. So that, in either case, our preaching is
 “ vain, and your hearing also vain.” Page 10th,
 Paragraph the 9th.

Oh, dear Sir, what kind of reasoning, or rather
 sophistry, is this ! Hath not God, who hath appointed
 salvation for a certain number, appointed also
 the preaching of the word, as a means to bring them
 to it ? Does anyone hold Election in any other sense ?
 And if so, how is preaching needless to them that
 are elected, when the Gospel is designed by God
 himself to be the power of God unto their eternal
 salvation ? And since we know not who are elect,
 and who reprobate, we are to preach promiscuously
 to all ; for the word may be useful, even to the
 non-elect, in restraining them from much wicked-
 ness and sin. However, it is enough to excite
 to the utmost diligence in preaching and hearing,
 when we consider that, by these means, some, even
 as many as the Lord hath ordained to eternal life,
 shall certainly be quickened, and enabled to believe.
 And who that attends, especially with reverence
 and care, can tell but he may be found of that happy
 number ?

Secondly,

Secondly, You say, “ that it (viz. the doctrine of
 “ Election and Reprobation) directly tends to de-
 “ stroy that holiness which is the end of all the or-
 “ dinances of God. For, (says the dear mistaken
 “ Mr. Wesley) it wholly takes away those first
 “ motives to follow after it, so frequently proposed
 “ in Scripture. The hope of future reward, and
 “ fear of punishment; the hope of Heaven, and fear
 “ of Hell, &c.” Page 11th.

I thought one, that carries Perfection to such an
 exalted pitch as dear Mr. Wesley does, would know
 that a true lover of the Lord Jesus Christ would
 strive to be holy for the sake of being holy, and
 work for Christ out of love and gratitude, without
 any regard to the rewards of Heaven, or fear of Hell.
 You remember, dear Sir, what Scougall says—
 “ Love’s a more powerful motive, that does them
 “ move.” But passing by this, and granting that
 rewards and punishments (as they certainly are) may
 be motives from which a Christian may be honestly
 stirred up to act for God, how does the doctrine of
 Election destroy these motives? Do not the elect
 know, that the more good works they do, the greater
 will be their reward? And is not that encourage-
 ment enough to set them upon, and cause them to
 persevere in, working for Jesus Christ? And how
 does the doctrine of Election destroy Holiness?
 Who ever preached any other Election than what
 the Apostle preached, when he said—“ Chosen
 “ through

“ through sanctification of the Spirit?” Nay, is not Holiness made a mark of our Election by all that preach it? And how, then, can the doctrine of Election destroy holiness?

The instance which you bring to illustrate your assertion, indeed, dear Sir, is quite impertinent. For you say—“ If a sick man knows that he must “ unavoidably die or unavoidably recover, though “ he knows not which, it is not reasonable to take “ any physic at all.” Page 11. Dear Sir, what absurd reasoning is here! Was you ever sick in your life? If so, did not the bare probability or possibility of your recovering, though you knew it was unalterably fixed that you must live or die, encourage you to take physic? For how did you know but that very physic might be the means God intended to recover you by? Just thus it is as to the doctrine of Election. “ I know that it is unalterably fixed,” may one say, “ that I must be damned or saved. But since I know not which for a certainty, why should I not strive, though at present in a state of nature, since I know not but this striving may be the means God has intended to bless, in order to bring me into a state of grace?” Dear Sir, consider these things. Make an impartial application; and then judge what little reason you had to conclude the 10th Paragraph, Page 12, in these words—“ So “ directly does this doctrine tend to shut the “ very gate of Holiness in general, to hinder “ unholy

“ unholy men from ever approaching thereto, or
 “ striving to enter in thereat !”

“ As directly,” (Paragraph 11.) say you, “ does
 “ the Doctrine tend to destroy several particular
 “ branches of Holiness, such as Meekness, Love,
 “ &c.” I shall say little, dear Sir, in answer to this
 Paragraph. Dear Mr. Wesley, perhaps, has been dis-
 puting with some warm, narrow-spirited men, that
 held Election, and then infers, that their warmth and
 narrowness of spirit was owing to their principles.
 But does not dear Mr. Wesley know many dear
 children of God, who are Predestinarians, and yet
 are meek, lowly, pitiful, courteous, tender-hearted,
 of a Catholic spirit, and kind, and hope to see the
 most vile and profligate of men converted? And
 why? Because they know God saved them by an
 act of his electing love, and they know not but he
 may have elected those who now seem to be the
 most abandoned. But, dear Sir, we must not judge
 of the truth of principles in general, nor of this of
 Election in particular, entirely from the practice of
 some that profess to hold them. If so, I am sure
 much might be said against your own. For I appeal
 to your own heart, whether or not you have not felt
 in yourself, or observed in others, a narrow-spirited-
 ness, and some disunion of soul, towards those that
 hold particular Redemption? If so, then, according to
 your own rule, *Universal Redemption* is wrong, because
 it destroys several branches of Holiness, such as Meek-
 ness, Love, &c. But, not to insist upon this, I beg
 you

you would observe, that your inference is entirely set aside by the force of the Apostle's argument, and the language which he expressly uses. For, Col. iii. 12, and 13, he says, *Put on, therefore, (as the Elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness, of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* Here we see that the Apostle exhorts them to put on bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, &c. upon this consideration, namely, because they were elect of God. And all who have experimentally felt this doctrine in their hearts, feel that these graces are the genuine effects of their being elected of God.

But, perhaps, dear Mr. Wesley may be mistaken in this point, and call that passion, which is only zeal for God's truths. You know, dear Sir, the Apostle exhorts us to "contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints;" and therefore you must not condemn all that appear zealous for the doctrine of Election, as narrow-spirited or persecutors, because they think it their duty to oppose you. I am sure, I love you in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and think I could lay down my life for your sake; but yet, dear Sir, I cannot help strenuously opposing your errors upon this important subject, because I think you warmly, though not designedly, oppose the truth, as it is in Jesus. May the Lord remove

the scales of prejudice from off the eyes of your mind, and give you a zeal according to true Christian knowledge!

Thirdly, Says your Sermon, Page 13th, Paragraph 12.—“ This Doctrine tends to destroy the
“ comforts of Religion, the happiness of Christiani-
“ ty, &c.”

But how does Mr. Wesley know this, who never believed Election? I believe, they who have experienced it, will agree with our 17th Article, “ That
“ the godly consideration of Predestination, and
“ Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, un-
“ speakable comfort, to godly persons, and such as
“ feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of
“ Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their
“ earthly members, and drawing their minds to high
“ and heavenly things; as well because it does greatly
“ establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salva-
“ tion, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because
“ it doth fervently kindle their love towards God,
“ &c.” This plainly shews that our godly Reformers did not think Election destroyed Holiness, or the comforts of Religion. As for my own part, this Doctrine is my daily support. I should utterly sink under a dread of my impending trials, was I not firmly persuaded that God has chosen me in Christ from before the foundation of the world; and that now being effectually called, he will suffer none to pluck me out of his Almighty Hand.

You proceed thus—“ This is evident as to all those
“ who

“ who believe themselves to be reprobate, or only
 “ suspect or fear it; all the great and precious pro-
 “ mises are lost to them; they afford them no ray
 “ of comfort.”

In answer to this, let me observe, that none living, especially none who are desirous of Salvation, can know that they are not of the number of God's elect. None but the unconverted can have any just reason so much as to fear it. And would dear Mr. Wesley give comfort, or dare you apply the precious promises of the Gospel, being children's bread, to men in a natural state, while they continue so? God forbid! What if the doctrine of Election and Reprobation does put some upon doubting? So does that of Regeneration. But is not this doubting a good means to put them upon searching and striving, and that striving a good means to make their Calling and their Election sure? This is one reason, among many others, why I admire the doctrine of Election, and am convinced that it should have a place in Gospel Ministry, and should be insisted on with faithfulness and care. It has a natural tendency to rouse the soul out of it's carnal security, and therefore many carnal men cry out against it: whereas *Universal Redemption* is a notion sadly adapted to keep the soul in it's lethargic, sleepy condition; and therefore so many natural men admire and applaud it.

Your 13th, 14th, and 15th Paragraphs, come next

to be considered. "The witness of the Spirit," (you say, Paragraph 14th, Page 14) "Experience shews
 "to be much obstructed by this doctrine." But,
 dear Sir, whose experience? Not your own; for
 in your Journal, from your embarking for Georgia
 to your return to London, Page the last, you seem to
 acknowledge that you have it not, and therefore you
 are no competent judge in this matter. You must
 mean, then, the experience of others. For you say in
 the same Paragraph—"Even in those, who have
 "tasted of that good gift, who yet have soon lost it
 "again," (I suppose you mean lost the *sense* of it
 again) "and fallen back into doubts and fears,
 "and darkness, even horrible darkness, that might be
 "felt, &c." Now as to the darkness of desertion,
 was not this the case of Jesus Christ himself, after he
 had received an unmeasurable unction of the Holy
 Ghost? *Was not his soul exceeding sorrowful, even*
unto death, in the garden? And was he not sur-
 rounded with an horrible darkness, even "a dark-
 "ness that might be felt," when on the Cross he
 cried out, "My God! my God! why hast thou
 "forsaken me?" And that all his followers are liable
 to the same, is it not evident from Scripture? For
 says the Apostle, "He was tempted in all things
 "like unto his brethren, that he might be able to suc-
 "cour those that are tempted." And is not their
 liability thereunto well consistent with that con-
 formity to him in suffering, which his members are
 to

to bear? Why then should persons falling into darkness, after they have received the witness of the Spirit, be any argument against the doctrine of Election? "Yes, (you say) many, very many of those
 " that hold it not in all parts of the earth, have enjoyed the uninterrupted witness of the Spirit, the
 " continual light of God's countenance, from the
 " moment wherein they first believed for many
 " months or years to this very day." But how does dear Mr. Wesley know this? Has he consulted the experience of many, very many, in all parts of the earth? Or, could he be sure of what he hath advanced without sufficient grounds, would it follow, that their being kept in this light is owing to their not believing the doctrine of Election? No; this, according to the sentiments of our Church, "greatly confirms and establishes a true Christian's Faith
 " of eternal Salvation through Christ;" and is an anchor of Hope, both sure and stedfast, when he walks in darkness and sees no light, as certainly he may, even after he hath received the witness of the Spirit, whatever you or others may unadvisedly assert to the contrary. Then to have respect to God's everlasting Covenant, and to throw himself upon the free distinguishing love of that God who changeth not, will make him lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees. But without the belief of the doctrine of Election, and the immutability of the free love of God, I cannot
 see

see how it is possible that any should have a comfortable assurance of eternal Salvation. What could it signify to a man whose conscience is thoroughly awakened, and who is warned in good earnest to seek deliverance from the wrath to come, though he should be assured that all his past sins are forgiven, and that he is now a child of God; if, notwithstanding this, he may hereafter become a child of the Devil, and be cast into Hell at last? Could such an assurance yield any solid, lasting comfort, to a person convinced of the corruption and treachery of his own heart, and of the malice, subtlety, and power of Satan? No! That which alone deserves the name of a *full Assurance of Faith*, is such an assurance as emboldens the believer, under the sense of his interest in distinguishing love, to give the challenge to all his adversaries, whether men or devils, and that with regard to all their future as well as present attempts to destroy; saying with the Apostle, “ Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s Elect? It is God that justifies me: Who is he that condemns me? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for me. Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things I am more than conqueror, through Him that loved me. For I am persuaded,

“suaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor
 “principalities nor powers, nor things present, nor
 “things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any
 “other creature, shall be able to separate me from
 “the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my
 “Lord.”

This, dear Sir, is the triumphant language of every soul that has attained a full assurance of faith. And this assurance can only arise from a belief of God's electing, everlasting love. That many have an assurance that they are in Christ to-day, but take no thought for, or are not assured they shall be in him to-morrow, nay, to all eternity, is rather their imperfection and unhappiness than their privilege. I pray God bring all such to a sense of his eternal love, that they may no longer build upon their own faithfulness, but on the unchangeableness of that God whose gifts and callings are without repentance. For those whom God has once justified, he also will glorify. I observed before, dear Sir, it is not always a safe rule to judge of the truth of principles from people's practice. And therefore, supposing all that held *Universal Redemption* in your way of explaining it, after they received Faith, *enjoyed the continual, uninterrupted light of God's countenance*, it does not follow, that this is a fruit of their principle: for that, I am sure, has a natural tendency to keep the soul in darkness for ever; because the creature thereby is taught, that his being kept in a state of Salvation is owing to his own free-will.

And

And what a sandy foundation is that for a poor creature to build his hopes of perseverance upon! Every relapse into sin, every surprize by temptation, must throw him "into doubts and fears, into horrible darkness, even darkness that may be felt." Hence it is, that the letters which have been lately sent me by those who hold *Universal Redemption*, are dead and lifeless, dry and inconsistent, in comparison of those I receive from persons on the contrary side. Those who settle in the *universal* scheme, though they might begin in the Spirit, whatever they may say to the contrary, are ending in the flesh, and building up a righteousness founded on their own free-will; whilst the others triumph in hopes of the glory of God, and build upon God's never-failing promise and unchangeable love, even when his sensible presence is withdrawn from them. But I would not judge of the truth of Election by the experience of any particular persons: if I did, (O bear with me in this foolishness of boasting!) I think I myself might glory in Election. For these five or six years, I have received the witness of God's Spirit. Since that, blessed be God, I have not doubted a quarter of an hour of having a saving interest in Jesus Christ. But with grief and humble shame I do acknowledge, I have fallen into sin often since that. Though I do not, dare not, allow of any one transgression, yet hitherto I have not been (nor do I expect that while I am in this present world I ever shall be) able to live one day perfectly free from all defects and sin. And since the

Scriptures

Scriptures declare, *that there is not a just man upon earth, no not among those of the highest attainments in Grace, that doeth good, and sinneth not*; we are sure that this will be the case of all the children of God. The universal experience and acknowledgment of this, among the godly in every age, is abundantly sufficient to confute the error of those who hold it in an absolute sense, *that after a man is born again, he cannot commit sin; especially since the Holy Ghost condemns the persons who say they have no sin, as deceiving themselves, as being destitute of the truth, and making God a liar,* 1 Epist. John i. 8, 10. I have been also in heaviness through manifold temptations, and expect to be often so before I die. Thus were the Apostles and primitive Christians themselves. Thus was Luther, that man of God, who, as far as I can find, did not, peremptorily at least, hold Election; and the great John Arndt was in the utmost perplexity a quarter of an hour before he died; and yet he was no Predestinarian. And if I must speak freely, I believe your fighting so strenuously against the doctrine of Election, and pleading so vehemently for a sinless Perfection, are among the reasons or culpable causes, why you are kept out of the liberties of the Gospel, and that full assurance of faith, which they enjoy, who have experimentally tasted and daily feed upon God's electing, everlasting love.

But, perhaps, you may say, that Luther and Arndt were no Christians, at least very weak ones. I know

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you think meanly of Abraham, though he was eminently called the Friend of God; and I believe also of David, the man after God's own heart. No wonder, therefore, that, in a letter you sent me not long since, you should tell me, "That no Baptist or
 " Presbyterian writer whom you have read knew
 " any thing of the liberties of Christ." What! neither Bunyan, Henry, Flavel, Halyburton, or none of the New-England and Scotch divines! See, dear Sir, what narrow-spiritedness and want of charity arise from your principles! and then do not cry out against Election any more, on account of it's being "destructive of meekness and love!"

Fourthly, I shall now proceed to another head. Again, says the dear Mr. Wesley, Pag. 15. Par. 16. "How uncomfortable a thought is this, that thousands and millions of men, without any preceding
 " offence or fault of theirs, were unchangeably
 " doomed to everlasting burnings!"

But who ever asserted, that thousands and millions of men, without any preceding offence or fault of theirs, were unchangeably doomed to everlasting burnings? Do not they who believe God's dooming men to everlasting burnings, also believe that God looked upon them as men fallen in Adam? and that that decree which ordained the punishment, first regarded the crime by which it was deserved? How then are they doomed without any preceding fault? Surely Mr. Wesley will own God's justice
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in imputing Adam's sin to his posterity; and also that, after Adam fell, and his posterity in him, God might justly have passed them ALL by, without sending his own Son to be a Saviour for ANY ONE. Unless you heartily agree to both these points, you do not believe Original Sin aright. If you do own them, then you must acknowledge the doctrine of Election and Reprobation to be highly just and reasonable: for, if God might justly impute Adam's sin to ALL, and afterwards have passed by ALL, then he might justly pass by *some*. Turn on the right-hand, or on the left, you are reduced to an inextricable dilemma. And, if you would be consistent, you must either give up the doctrine of the Imputation of Adam's Sin, or receive the amiable doctrine of Election, with a holy and righteous reprobation, as it's consequent: for, whether you can believe it or no, the word of God abides faithful—*The Election has obtained it, and the rest were blinded.*

Your 17th Parag. Page 16, I pass over. What has been said on Parag. the 9th and 10th, with little alteration, will answer it. I shall only say, it is the doctrine of Election that mostly presses me to abound in good works. I am made willing to suffer all things for the elect's sake. This makes me preach with comfort, because I know salvation does not depend on man's free-will, but the Lord makes them willing in the day of his power; and can make use of me to bring some of his elect home, when and where he pleases. But—

Fifthly, You say, Par. 18, Page 17—" This doctrine has a direct, manifest tendency, to overthrow the whole Christian religion. For, (say you) supposing that eternal, unchangeable decree, one part of mankind must be saved, though the Christian Revelation were not in being."

But, dear Sir, how does that follow, since it is only by the Christian Revelation that we are acquainted with God's design of saving his Church by the death of his Son? Yea, it is settled in the Everlasting Covenant, that this salvation shall be applied to the Elect through the knowledge and faith of Him; as the Prophet says, *By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many*, Isa. liii. 11. How, then, has the doctrine of Election a direct tendency to overthrow the whole Christian Revelation? Who ever thought, that God's declaration to Noah, that seed-time and harvest should never cease, could afford an argument for the neglect of ploughing or sowing? or that the unchangeable purpose of God, that harvest should not fail, rendered the heat of the sun, or the influence of the heavenly bodies, unnecessary to produce it? No more does God's absolute purpose of saving his chosen preclude the necessity of the Gospel Revelation, or the use of any of the means through which he has determined the decree shall take effect. Nor will the right understanding, or the reverent belief of God's decree, ever allow or suffer a Christian, in any case, to separate the means from

from the end, or the end from the means. And since we are taught by the Revelation itself, that this was intended and given by God as a means of bringing home his elect, we therefore receive it with joy, prize it highly, using it in faith; and endeavour to spread it through all the world, in the full assurance that wherever God sends it, sooner or later, it shall be savingly useful to all the elect within it's call. How, then, in holding this doctrine, do we join with modern unbelievers in making the Christian Revelation unnecessary? No, dear Sir, you mistake. Infidels of all kinds are on your side of the question. Deists, Arians, Socinians, arraign God's sovereignty, and stand up for Universal Redemption. I pray God, dear Mr. Wesley's Sermon, as it has grieved the hearts of many of God's children, may not also strengthen the hands of many of his most avowed enemies! Here I could almost lie down and weep! *O, tell it not in Gath! Publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice, lest the sons of Unbelief should triumph!*

Farther, you say, Page 18th, Par. 19th—"This doctrine makes Revelation contradict itself." For instance, say you, "The asserters of this doctrine interpret that text of Scripture, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*, as implying that God, in a literal sense, hated Esau and all the reprobates from eternity!" And when considered as *fallen in Adam*, were they not objects of his hatred?

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And might not God, of his own good pleasure, love or shew mercy to Jacob and the elect, and yet at the same time do the reprobate no wrong? But you say, "God is Love." And cannot God be Love, unless he shews the same mercy to all?

Again, says dear Mr. Wesley, "They infer from that text, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*, that God is mercy only to some men, viz. the elect, and that he has mercy for those only; flatly contrary to which is the whole tenor of the Scripture, as is that express declaration in particular, *The Lord is loving to every man, and his mercy is over all his works.*" And so it is, but not his *saving* Mercy. God is loving to every man, he sends his rain upon the evil and upon the good. But you say, "*God is no respecter of persons.*" No! For every one, whether Jew or Gentile, that believeth on Jesus, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him. *But he that believeth not shall be damned.* For *God is no respecter of persons*, i. e. upon the account of any outward condition or circumstance in life whatever. Nor does the doctrine of Election in the least suppose him to be so; but as the sovereign Lord of all, who is debtor to none, he has a right to do what he will with his own, and dispense his favours to what objects he sees fit, merely at his pleasure. And his supreme right herein is clearly and strongly asserted in those passages of Scripture, where he says, *I will have mercy on whom I will have*

have mercy, and have compassion on whom I will have compassion, Rom. ix. 15. Exod. xxxiii. 19.

Farther, in Page 19th, you represent us as inferring from the text—" *The children not being yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to Election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, (unto Rebecca) The elder shall serve the younger;*"—that our predestination to life now depends on the fore-knowledge of God. But who infers this, dear Sir? For if fore-knowledge signifies approbation, as it does in several parts of Scripture, then we confess that Predestination and Election do depend on God's fore-knowledge. But if by God's fore-knowledge you understand God's foreseeing some good works done by his creatures as the foundation or reason of chusing them, and therefore electing them; then we say that, in this sense, Predestination does not any way depend on God's fore-knowledge. But I referred you, at the beginning of this letter, to Dr. Edwards his *Veritas Redux*, which I recommended to you in a late letter, with Elisha Cole on *God's Sovereignty*. Be pleased to read those; and also the excellent sermons of Mr. Cooper, of Boston, in New-England, which I also sent you, and I doubt not but you will see all your objections answered. Though I would observe, that after all our reading on both sides the question, we shall never in this life be able to search out God's de-

crees to perfection. No: we must humbly adore what we cannot comprehend; and, with the great Apostle, at the end of our enquiries, cry out, *Oh! the depth, &c.* Or with our Lord, when he was admiring God's Sovereignty, "*Even so Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.*"

However, it may not be amiss to take notice, that if those texts, "*God willeth that none should perish—I have no pleasure in him that dieth,*" and such like, be taken in their strictest sense, then no one will be damned.

But here's the distinction: God taketh no pleasure in the death of sinners, so as to delight simply in their death; but he delights to magnify his justice, by inflicting the punishment which their iniquities have deserved—as a righteous judge, who takes no pleasure in condemning a criminal, may yet justly command him to be executed, that law and justice may be satisfied, even though it be in his power to procure him a reprieve.

I would hint farther, that you unjustly charge the doctrine of *Reprobation* with blasphemy; whereas the doctrine of *Universal Redemption*, as you set it forth, is really the highest reproach upon the dignity of the Son of God, and the merit of his blood. Consider, therefore, whether it be not blasphemy rather, to say, as you do, (Page 20.) "Christ not only died for those that are saved, but also for those that perish." The text you have misapplied

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to gloss over this, see explained by Ridgely, Edwards, Henry ; and I purposely omit answering your texts myself, that you may be brought to read such treatises, which, under God, would shew you your error. You cannot make good this assertion, " That Christ died for them that perish," without holding (as Peter Boehler, one of the Moravian brethren, in order to make out *Universal Redemption*, lately frankly confessed in a letter) " That all the " damned souls would hereafter be brought out of " Hell." I cannot think Mr. Wesley is thus minded. And yet, without this can be proved, *Universal Redemption*, taken in a literal sense, falls entirely to the ground. For how can *all* be universally redeemed, if *all* are not finally saved?

Dear Sir, For Jesus Christ's sake, consider how you dishonour God by denying Election. You plainly make Salvation depend, not on God's *Free Grace*, but on man's *Free Will*. And it is more than probable, Jesus Christ would not have had the satisfaction of seeing the fruit of his death in the eternal Salvation of one Soul. Our preaching would then be vain, and all invitations for people to believe in him, would also be in vain.

But, blessed be God, our Lord knew for whom he died. There was an eternal compact between the Father and Son. A certain number was then given him, as the purchase and reward of his obedience and death. For these he prayed, (John, xvii.) and not for the world. For these, and these only,

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he is now interceding, and with their Salvation he will be fully satisfied.

I purposely omit making any farther particular remarks on the several last Pages of your Sermon. Indeed, had not your name, dear Sir, been prefixed to the Sermon, I could not have been so uncharitable as to think you were the Author of such sophistry. You beg the question, in saying that God has declared, (notwithstanding you own, I suppose, some will be damned) that he would save all, *i. e.* every *individual* person. You take it for granted (for solid proof you have none) that God is unjust, if he passes by any; and then you exclaim against the *horrible Decree*. And yet, as I before hinted, in holding the doctrine of *Original Sin*, you profess to believe that he might justly have passed by all.

Dear, dear Sir! O be not offended! For Christ's sake, be not rash! Give yourself to reading. Study the Covenant of Grace. Down with your carnal reasoning. Be a little child. And then, instead of pawning your Salvation, as you have done in a late Hymn-book, if the doctrine of *Universal Redemption* be not true; instead of talking of sinless Perfection, as you have done in the Preface to that Hymn-book, and making man's Salvation depend on his own Free-will, as you have in this Sermon; you will compose a Hymn in praise of sovereign, distinguishing Love. You will caution believers against striving to work a Perfection out of their own hearts; and print another Sermon the reverse of this, and entitle it, *Free Grace*

Grace indeed. *Free*, because not *free* to *all*; but *free*, because God may withhold or give it to whom and when he pleases.

Till you do this, I must doubt whether or not you know yourself. In the mean while, I cannot but blame you for censuring the Clergy of our Church for not keeping to their Articles, when you yourself, by your principles, positively deny the 9th, 10th, and 17th. Dear Sir, these things ought not to be. God knows my heart, as I told you before, so I declare again, nothing but a single regard to the honour of Christ has forced this Letter from me. I love and honour you for his sake; and, when I come to Judgment, will thank you, before men and angels, for what you have, under God, done for my soul.

There, I am persuaded, I shall see dear Mr. Wesley, convinced of *Election* and everlasting Love. And it often fills me with pleasure, to think how I shall behold you casting your crown down at the feet of the Lamb; and, as it were, filled with a holy blushing for opposing the Divine Sovereignty in the manner you have done.

But I hope the Lord will shew you this before you go hence. O how do I long for that day! If the Lord should be pleased to make use of this Letter for that purpose, it would abundantly rejoice the heart of, dear and honoured Sir,

Your affectionate, though unworthy,

Brother and Servant in Christ,

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

A HYMN by the Reverend Dr. WATTS,

On Rom. ix. 21, 22, 23, 24.

- 1 **B**EHOLD the Potter and the Clay;
 He forms his vessels as he please:
 Such is our God, and such are we,
 The Subjects of his high decrees.
- 2 Doth not the Workman's power extend
 O'er all the mass—which part to chuse,
 And mould it for a nobler end,
 And which to leave for viler use?
- 3 May not the sovereign Lord on high
 Dispense his favours as he will?
 Chuse some to life, while others die,
 And yet be just and gracious still?
- 4 What if, to make his terror known,
 He lets his patience long endure,
 Suffering vile Rebels to go on,
 And seal their own destruction sure!
- 5 What if he means to shew his Grace,
 And his electing Love employs,
 To mark out some of mortal race,
 And form them fit for heavenly joys!

6 Shall

6 *Shall man reply against the Lord?
And call his Maker's ways unjust,
The thunder of whose dreadful word
Can crush a thousand worlds to dust?*

7 *But, O my soul, if truth so bright
Should dazzle and confound thy sight,
Yet still his written Will obey,
And wait the great decisive day.*

8 *Then shall he make his justice known;
And the whole world, before his Throne,
With joy or terror, shall confess
The glory of his Righteousness.*



Of Original or Birth Sin.

ORIGINAL Sin standeth not in the following of Adam, as the Pelagians do vainly talk; but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth contrary to the Spirit; and therefore, in every person born in this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain; yea, in them that are regenerate, whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek *φρονιμα σαρκος*, which some do expound the Wisdom, some Sensuality, some the Affection, some the Desire of the Flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is *no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized*, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of Sin.

Of Free-will.

THE condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God: Wherefore, we have
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no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ *preventing us*, that we may have a good-will, and *working with us when we have that good-will*.

Of Predestination and Election.

PREDESTINATION to Life, is the *everlasting purpose of God*, whereby (*before the foundations of the world were laid*) he hath *constantly decreed* by his counsel, *secret to us*, to deliver from curse and damnation, those whom he hath *chosen in Christ out of mankind*, and to bring them by Christ to *everlasting salvation*, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, *be called according to God's purpose*, by his Spirit working in due season; they through grace *obey the Calling*; they be *justified freely*; they be made *sons of God by adoption*; they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; they *walk religiously in good works*; and at length, by God's mercy, *they attain to everlasting felicity*.

As the godly consideration of *Predestination* and our Election in Christ is full of *sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort*, to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the *working of the Spirit of Christ*, mortifying the works of the *flesh*, and their *earthly members*, and *drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things*, as well because it doth greatly *estab-*
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bliss and *confirm* their faith of *eternal Salvation*, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth *fervently kindle their love towards God*; so, for *curious* and *carnal persons*, lacking the *Spirit of Christ*, to have continually before their eyes the *sentence of God's Predestination*, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such-wise as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture: and in our doings, that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared to us in the word of God.

FINIS.